

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 002289

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS  
AF FOR RAYNOR  
NSC FOR TEITLEBAUM  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR NEARY  
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER  
VOA/IBB FOR OGULNIK, STEWART AND MENGESHA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [Z1](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT VOA'S STUDIO 7 UNDER HEAVY FIRE  
AGAIN; HARARE  
SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

REF: (A) HARARE 001536 (B) HARARE 002017 (C)  
HARARE 002170

11. Voice of America's (VOA) Studio 7 program on Zimbabwe made the hub of the lead story carried in the November 23 edition of the government-controlled weekly "The Sunday Mail" (circulation 55 - 70,000), in which the United States Government is slammed for allegedly setting up a transmitter in Botswana in order to broadcast "anti-Zimbabwe propaganda" and "demonizing the country" ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) in Abuja, Nigeria next month. The propaganda article by the paper's political editor, Munyaradzi Huni, comes hard on the heels of a successful visit to Zimbabwe by Botswana's Foreign Minister Retired Lt. Gen. Marahfe Mompoti. The article inadvertently ended up being a Studio 7 advertorial piece, announcing the existence of the station, the frequency, and time of broadcast. Excerpts of the article, printed under headline "U. S. sets up anti-Zim radio in Botswana," follow:
12. "The U. S. has set up a medium wave radio transmitter that is allegedly broadcasting anti-Zimbabwe propaganda from a site called Selebe Pikwe in Botswana, a move that could raise tension between the two neighboring countries, investigations have revealed. The hostile broadcasts being beamed from the VOA transmitter are aimed at demonizing the country ahead of the CHOGM set for Abuja, Nigeria, early next month. . . Sources close to the operations of Transmedia, a company tasked with managing the country's mass-market public broadcasting infrastructure, said the hostile broadcasts were (being) received in Matabeleland North and Midlands provinces. `Reception is clearer especially at night as the coverage area increases. We believe this is being broadcast from the VOA transmitter in Botswana on frequency 909 Khz at a site called Selebe Pikwe. We have come up with this conclusion because transmission from medium wave is mostly local and hence can only be done from the vicinity of the country," said the source. It is understood that VOA, which usually transmits on short wave, is giving Studio 7 a slot for broadcasting during the evening around 7 PM (local time) in the evening.
13. ". . . Recently the Minister of State for Information and Publicity, Professor Jonathan Moyo, said there was a transmitter transmitting hostile propaganda from a neighboring country but he did not name the country. These new revelations are set to raise tension between Zimbabwe and Botswana as in the past there have been allegations that Botswana has a U. S. military airbase near the Kalahari Desert. Botswana has denied the allegations. . . The situation is made worse considering the revelations earlier this year by the outgoing U. S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Mr. Walter Kansteiner who said his government was working with Botswana, South Africa and Mozambique to topple President Mugabe and his government from power. . . All three countries denied the allegations but some diplomats in Harare and some ZANU PF top officials urged the government to `dig deep' into the matter as `there is no smoke without fire.' Also earlier this year, Mr. Kansteiner was in Botswana where he had a lengthy stay after holding meetings with that country's leader Festus Mogae. . . His visit to Botswana was immediately followed by the visit by U. S. President George W. Bush who also met that country's leadership. Diplomatic sources who spoke on conditions of anonymity said the visits by the U. S. officials could have `given birth and saw the growth of Studio 7.'
14. "It is understood that Studio 7 has secretly recruited journalists from both the public and private media who are filing stories using pseudo names. Government sources say the security net is fast closing in on them and those found

`moonlighting' for the station would be `dealt with severely.'"

15. (SBU) COMMENT: From the moment VOA's Studio 7 hit the airwaves, the government of Zimbabwe, through the office of Information Minister Jonathan Moyo, has relentlessly attacked the United States Government for "toughening its hostility towards Zimbabwe" by "churning out propaganda about regime change" through Studio 7. Moyo amplified this scathing attack on the U. S. on July 29 when he met an Iranian delegation, in the country to revamp the television and frequency modulation (FM) network for the state-run Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). "The U. S. Government was sowing seeds of division among people in rural areas using a radio station known as Studio 7. . .Where we celebrate our own culture, the idea of a superpower imposing its will on the rest of the world is totally unacceptable," Moyo is quoted saying. Last October, Moyo was also heavily quoted in the independent newspapers as saying "Studio 7 will die. It faces death. They think we are sleeping, we want to see where they are going with Studio 7." This threat came immediately after the closure of Zimbabwe's first independent daily "The Daily News" on September 12.

With such a cheerless backdrop, the lead article in the November 23 edition of the government-controlled weekly "The Sunday Mail" is no surprise. It is almost certainly a planted story generated by Information Minister Jonathan Moyo, according to our contact at the newspaper. We believe that this is the first shot in a propaganda salvo aimed at pressuring the Government of Botswana over what Moyo views as anti-regime propaganda emanating from across the border. While Moyo is something of a one-man show in attacking any source of information on Zimbabwe that he can/does not control, it is probably that higher-ups in the GOZ have approved Moyo's effort to intimidate the Government of Botswana. (The article appears in the same edition as an article by the same Mr. Huni castigating Nigerian President Obasanjo for being influenced by the "white Commonwealth members to not invite President Mugabe to the Commonwealth CHOGM session in Abuja. Let it not be said that Moyo confines his bluster and bullying tactics to Zimbabweans, the U.S. and the U.K.)

SULLIVAN